

INSIDE

Page 2. **Mayor Winstead talks about the evolution of City services.**

Page 3. **Focus on 2003 City property taxes.**

Pages 4 and 5. **Parks and Rec activities.**

Page 6. **Earth Action on community building.**

Page 7. **Get to know your Sister City.**

Page 8. **Public Safety Training Center breaks ground.**

Tune in to City Hall on cable TV

Plug into City Hall by tuning to television programs with a Bloomington twist. The following cable TV programs are regularly featured on The Bloomington Channel 14:

LIVE MEETING

City Council

1st and 3rd
Mondays of
the month. 7 p.m.

LIVE MEETING

Planning Commission

1st and 3rd
Thursdays of
the month. 5:30 p.m.

"Bloomington Today"

The best source of Bloomington news on television

Sunday	12:30 p.m.
Monday	4:30 p.m.
Wednesday	6:30 p.m.
Thursday	12:30 p.m.
Friday	10 p.m.
Saturday	4 and 6:30 p.m.

"City Matters"

A monthly talk show hosted by Mayor Gene Winstead

Sunday	8 p.m.
Monday	8 a.m., 2 p.m.
Tuesday	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday	7:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

"Crime Time"

A weekly report from the Police Department

Sunday	12 and 10 p.m.
Monday	4 and 6 p.m.
Tuesday	12 p.m.
Friday	6 p.m.
Saturday	12 and 6 p.m.

For a full program schedule, visit www.TBC14.org or call the City's cable hotline at 952-563-8874. ♦

Weary deck, sinking low - a troubled bridge over water



Old Cedar Avenue Bridge spans 865 feet of Long Meadow Lake. When the new Cedar Avenue Bridge opened in 1979, the Minnesota Department of Transportation transferred ownership to the City. Nearly 10 years ago, the bridge was declared unstable for vehicles and the City restricted its use to bicycles and pedestrians.

As part of an upgrade project in the 1990s, the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission (now Metropolitan Council Environmental Services) became the lead agency in efforts to construct an earth berm with a trail which would have provided a way to cross the lake. This solution was rejected by the permitting agencies.

Today the bridge continues to deteriorate. With substandard railings and lack of current safety features, the bridge shows its 83 years. Last December, it was closed to all traffic.

The future is uncertain - there is no local funding for repairs. New decking would cost more than \$2 million and extend the bridge's life only 20 years. One option consists of building a 10-foot wide pedestrian bridge across existing sturdy piers. Denied a requested \$3 million federal grant, the City will apply again this year for the 2007-2008 funding cycle. The bridge is also eligible for the National Registry of Historic Places, and the City will pursue recording its historical significance.

For more information, call Senior Civil Engineer Wayne Force at 952-563-4865. ♦

Facilities Update

Construction on time and within budget

As spring nears, crews begin the final leg of construction of the Police/City Hall/Arts Center located at 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road. With just a few months before the opening, construction of the facilities is on time and within budget. The 18-month project started with demolition and grading in August 2001 and is scheduled for completion in late spring. Many factors have played a role in the successful construction of this project.

A good time to build

A slower construction market resulting from the economy's downturn make it a good time to build. Very favorable bids came in well under estimates. In addition, materials fabricated off-site are easier to procure during a slower building period.

Local economic impact

Because projects around the metro area were put on hold due to the soft economy, the City's project has been fully staffed in 20 construction trades. The project employs 300-500 people which benefits the local economy.

Favorable weather

Construction got off to a great start in December 2001. The mild winter allowed crews to finish footings and foundation work. This set the stage for an on-time steel delivery to

erect the structure. Dry weather last fall helped crews complete exterior finishes, install bituminous parking lots and sidewalk, and make improvements to Logan Avenue which runs adjacent to the site.

Experienced managers

M.A. Mortenson, professional construction managers with experience on large-scale national projects, has contributed greatly to the project.

"Mortenson's detailed scheduling and construction planning has kept the project moving," said Clark Arneson, the City's Project Manager. "A commendable, strong Minnesota work ethic is apparent in all those involved and we have experienced a cooperative construction environment."

Customer service strategy

The Police/City Hall/Arts Center is being built from on-hand reserves and existing revenue streams. No increase in taxes, other than the voter-approved referendum for the arts center, will fund the capital facilities. (That portion is about \$1.60 per month for the average home.)

Over 70 percent of the City's costs to provide services are in personnel; the long term cost of its facilities make up only 5 percent of its costs. See page 3. Facilities investment improves customer service and enhances the pro-



ductivity of the service providers. The funding, beyond the voter-approved referendum, include:

- ♦ On-hand funds designated for capital facilities.
- ♦ A portion of the police retirement funds returned to the City by the State.
- ♦ Existing internal revenue streams taking advantage of low-interest lease purchase financing.

Background

In May 2000, the City Council authorized staff to

assemble a six-parcel site for a new Police/City Hall/Arts Center. This decision was based on a task force recommendation that current City facilities were inadequate for the city's needs. The plan created a campus for City services on a 15.6-acre site at 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road.

For information, call Clark Arneson at 952-563-8921 or e-mail arneson@ci.bloomington.mn.us. ♦

City of Bloomington
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Bloomington MN 55431-3096

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“City services change in response to residents’ needs and expectations. In 1907 Joe Friendshuh and his neighbors did not expect paved roads. By 1967, Joe’s grandchildren expected and enjoyed paved streets, snow plowing and public safety protection from the City’s Police and Fire Departments. Today, the City continues to provide these services at the lowest cost to residents.”

Community
Development Director
Larry Lee

In the 1950s, services that Bloomington residents expected the City to provide were very basic. The City’s budget was small and employees totaled less than 10. No golf course, pool or indoor ice arena existed and, before 1947, Bloomington relied on the city of Minneapolis for fire protection. Residents had low expectations for services with little, if any, being provided.

Demand drives services

As Bloomington grew, citizens’ expectations increased. In 1953, a police department was formed when the people felt the town of 14,000 needed one. In 1959, voters approved installation of water and sewer systems for the community when septic tanks contaminated shallow, residential wells.

Affordable, quality services

As Bloomington grew from a small town into a major metropolitan city, local government responded to the heightened expectations of the public, but the services remained reasonably priced. Compared to your other

Around 1907, 94th Street at Lyndale was a rut-filled road winding past Joe Friendshuh’s farm. Life was hard – each man and woman took care of all their family’s needs. The area attracted businesses and more families. This development drove the need to create a local government to provide cost-efficient services that protected and improved the lives of residents.



Bloomington Historical Society

monthly bills, City services are a bargain: \$15.81 for police protection, \$10.90 for plowed and well-maintained streets, and \$4.72 for fire protection. See page 3.

Analyzing potential needs

Citizens are the primary “customers” of government, so it makes sense to find out what they want and what can be provided at lower cost through shared effort. The City Council studies community-wide and individual requests, working with staff to analyze the benefits and costs of present and potential services.

Continually improving

The City continually examines the range of services and finds ways to make them better, whether it be implementing voting improvements,

meeting the City’s growing water needs or collaborating on a public safety training facility. See page 8.

To prepare for the service demands of today’s residents, cities must update infrastructure. The City of Bloomington has made significant investments in future services with improvements to the Public Works facility, the Water Treatment Plant, the aquatics center and the construction of a Police/City Hall/Arts Center. See page 1. Locating the facilities together will enable operations to run more efficiently, improving service without additional costs. Overall, capital expenditures, including all City facilities and equipment, are only 5 percent of the City’s total budget.

An eye to the future

Over the past decade, the City’s services continued to become more effective and efficient while adjusting to public demands. In addition,

the organization anticipated an eventual downturn in the economy. Services that could not be sustained in a typical downturn were not added. Strategies to offset declining revenues in downturns were developed. As demographics change and our population grows older, recreational activities, park configurations and housing alternatives will come into focus.

Bloomington’s proximity to major transportation routes has long been key to its development. The City will continue to provide leadership for upgrading these facilities, find even better ways to improve the safety of residential streets and promote alternative transportation.

Meeting the challenge

Community expectations drive the local government’s consideration of service needs and incentives to be cost-effective. The City of Bloomington meets the challenge by anticipating resident desires, conducting periodic reviews of services and, then, modifying and enhancing its services. ♦



Bloomington City Council

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Photographs of elected officials are presented by the City of Bloomington for informational purposes only.

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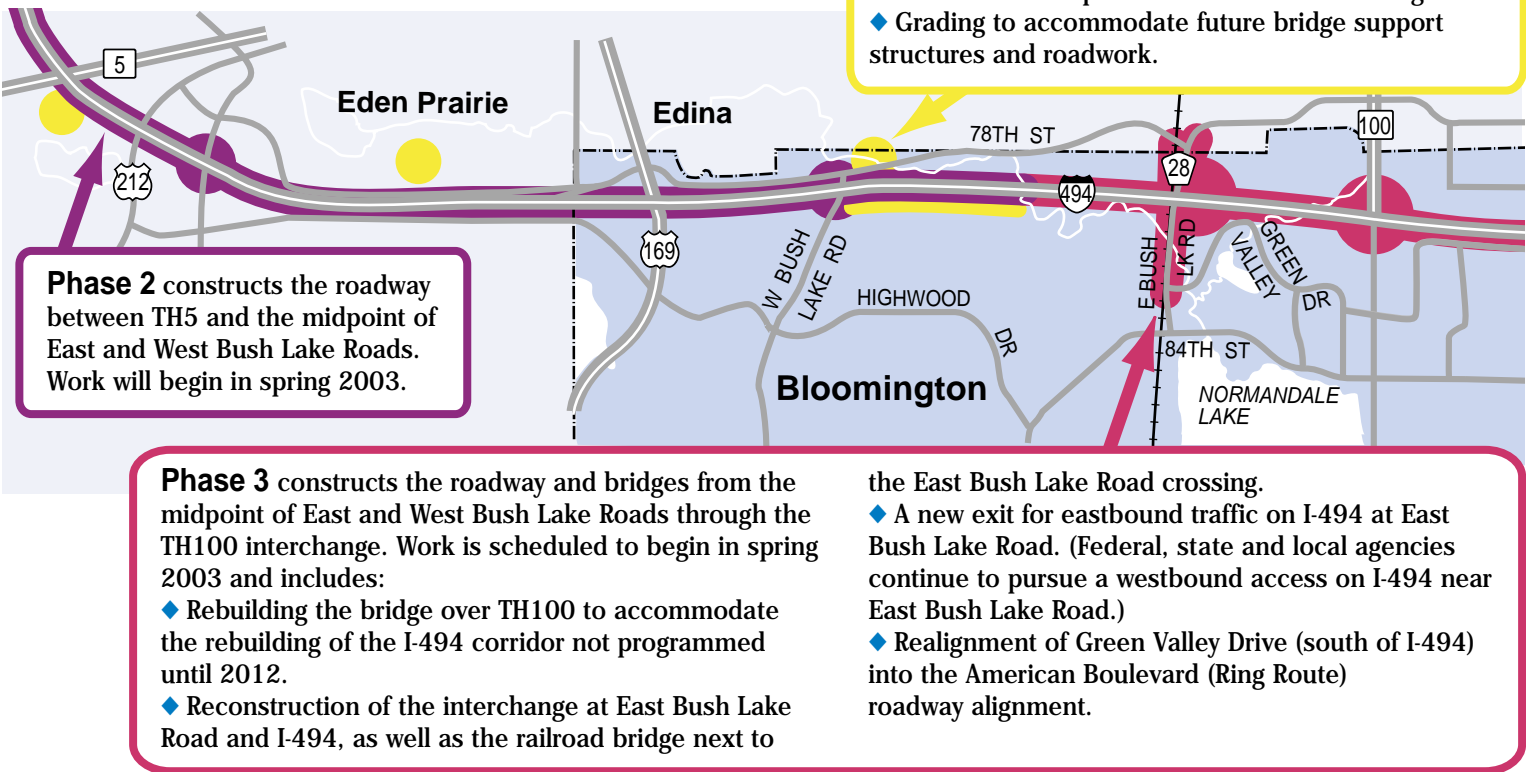
The **Briefing**, a bimonthly newsletter published by the municipal government organization of the City of Bloomington, Minnesota, is mailed to Bloomington residents and businesses. Direct comments or suggestions to Communications Administrator Diann Kirby, City of Bloomington, 2215 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3096; phone 952-563-8818; TTY 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; e-mail dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us. If you require Braille, larger print or computer disk, contact Diann Kirby, 952-563-8818.

The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance in employment or the provision of services. • The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations. For information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 2215 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3096; phone: 952-563-8700; TTY: 952-563-8740.

I-494 Third Lane Project underway

To ease traffic congestion, the I-494 Third Lane Project will construct an additional lane from Trunk Highway 5 (TH5) to Trunk Highway 100 (TH100 or Normandale Boulevard) in the I-494 corridor. In some sections of the roadway, a fourth lane leading to an exit ramp will be constructed. The Third Lane Project will occur in three phases. See map. Estimated cost of the project is \$75 million. Completion is scheduled for late fall 2004.

For more information on the I-494 Third Lane Project, call Jim Gates at 952-563-8730. ♦



Finance

2003 City property taxes

Services remain affordable despite challenges

The City Council’s adoption of the 2003 General Fund Budget in December resulted in a tax levy of \$32,274,623, an increase of 4.9 percent over 2002. The increase is comprised of:

- ♦ 2.9 percent for the City’s primary operating costs.
- ♦ 0.6 percent for Debt Service.
- ♦ 1.4 percent as a partial hedge against a potential \$2 million loss of property tax aids from the state.

Based on this tax levy, the City’s portion of property taxes – approximately 31 percent – will increase from \$47.57 to \$52.09 per month for the owner of an average-priced home with a 2003 market value of \$202,210.

Conservative increase

“Including the 2003 increase, the City’s total levy dollar increase averaged 2.42 percent annually over the last 11 years,” explained Lori

Economy-Scholler, Bloomington Chief Financial Officer. “The City’s strong financial position and conservative spending pattern has helped to keep tax increases low.”

Home value/City services

Since 1995, market value on the average Bloomington home, valued at \$202,210 in 2003, increased an average of 8.9 percent per year. During the same period, the average annual cost for City services has increased 4.9 percent. See graph below.

A strong residential property market, moderate market increases for other property types and the State’s 2001 property tax reform increased overall residential property taxes for 2003. These factors also shifted the burden for the City’s share of the taxes from commercial/industrial and apartment properties to single family residential proper-

Monthly cost for City services		
Service type	2002	2003
Police	\$14.15	\$16.08
Public Works	10.35	10.80
Community Services	7.30	7.09
Debt and Capital	4.88	5.96
Finance, Legal, Human Resources	2.96	3.16
Fire	2.76	3.39
Technical Services	2.02	2.03
Community Development	1.93	2.50
Administration	1.22	1.08
Monthly total for City services	\$47.57	\$52.09
Average Home Value	\$178,900	\$202,210

ties. Due to the tax reform, even without any 2003 levy increase, the average home would have experienced a \$2.09 per month tax increase. Debt service and the potential loss of state aid offset added \$2.43 per month a total increase of \$4.52 per month.

Responsible budgeting

The City made adjustments in 2001 and 2002 for declining local revenues. The potential loss of state monies, promised to local property tax payers as part of the 2001 Property Tax Reform, and the City’s ongoing commitment to cost effective services again resulted in the City working to minimize the increase. As a result, the levy is \$1,558,048 below the state-imposed levy limit.

In a 2002 comparison of 14 communities in Hennepin County with over 20,000 residents, the property tax and property tax aids paid each month by the average household (when adjusted for Fiscal Disparities) showed **Bloom-**

ington ranking the lowest, with the average household paying \$37.50 per month in property taxes to the City.

A closer look

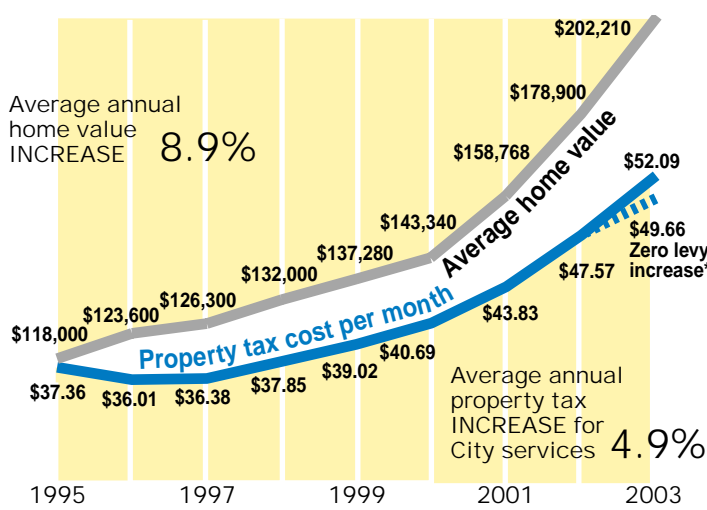
Public works, police and fire services account for about 60 percent of the monthly services for which homeowners pay. See chart above left.



Market Value Notices to arrive soon

More than 28,900 Market Value Notices will be mailed on February 20 to all taxable property owners in Bloomington. The notice format is a larger sized, self-mailer that allows the City to provide additional information to property owners at an affordable cost. If you have questions regarding the valuation of your property, call the City Assessor’s Office at 952-563-4644. ♦

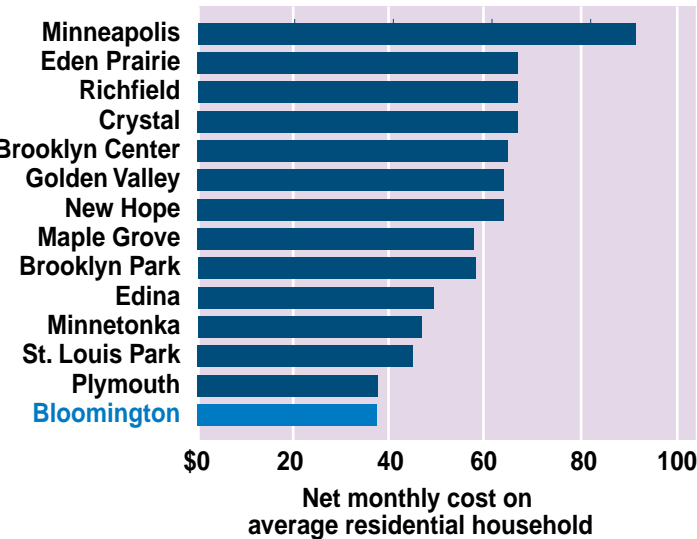
Increases in home market value and property tax for City services



NOTE: Homestead credit impact equalized for all years to provide comparability.

* With no increase in the levy, the average homeowner would see a \$2.09 increase due to state law changes and increased home market values.

Average household’s monthly property tax plus property tax aids (adjusted for Fiscal Disparities) paid to 14 Hennepin County cities in 2002



PARKS, RECREATION & ARTS UPDATE

For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877.



Summer jobs

Apply early for summer positions with the Parks and Recreation Division. A variety of part- and full-time openings are available for day camp, playground, Arts in the Parks, sports and water safety instructors as well as lifeguards, sound technicians and adaptive recreation aides. Call Parks and Recreation for an application and more information. ♦

Adult Sports

Adult tennis drills

Instructed by a certified teaching professional, drills are practice sessions to improve stroke production. Facilities include locker rooms, showers, sauna, whirlpool, steam room, swimming pool, indoor track and exercise room.

When: Session I February 12 - March 20.
Session II March 26 - May 1.
Times: Beginner Wednesdays 6 - 7 p.m.
Intermediate Thursdays 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Where: 98th Street Northwest Athletic Club.
Cost: \$51 for six one-hour lessons.
Limit: Eight per class; minimum four.

Daytime volleyball

Exercise and enjoy volleyball in the mornings. All games are played at the Bloomington National Guard Training and Community Center. You don't need a team - one will be formed each time.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays year-round.
Where: Bloomington National Guard Training and Community Center, 3300 W. 98th Street.
Time: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Cost: \$1.25 each session.

Men's, women's and co-rec softball

When: One evening per week starting May 5.
Where: Valley View and Dred Scott Playfields.
Cost: \$500 per team - Recreation.
\$670 per team - Fast Pitch and Double Header.
Deadline: March 14. ♦

19th Annual



This friendly competition challenges employees to shape up! Bloomington worksite coordinators receive special training and all materials needed to participate in the contest that runs from April 21 to June 1. Every week, employees record points for aerobic, strength-training and flexibility activities.

Trophies are awarded to the companies with the most points per employee. Sponsored by Parks and Recreation, this is a great way to introduce fitness, team spirit and a little fun into your workplace. Call Parks and Recreation for more information and sign up by April 7! ♦



Youth Activities



Spring Egg Hunt



Adaptive Recreation and Learning Exchange

Galaxy Youth Center



Youth Sports



Carnival

Saturday, February 22, 12:30 - 3 p.m.
Northwestern Health Sciences University,
84th and Penn Ave.

Games, exhibits, food, police and fire demonstrations, entertainment and lots of fun for kids and families. Event is free! Please bring a food item for the VEAP food shelf. ♦

For kids, ages 8 and under

Saturday, April 19, starts at 11 a.m.
Normandale Lake Park, 84th and Normandale Blvd.

Hey, kids! How many eggs can you fit into your basket? This annual event is sponsored by Parks and Recreation and the Bloomington Breakfast Optimist Club. ♦

The Adaptive Recreation and Learning Exchange offers recreational, leisure and community education programs that are specifically designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the cities of Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina and Richfield. For more information, call Parks and Recreation or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us.

Inclusion services provided

Under the direction of the Adaptive Recreation Supervisor, inclusion services allow program participants with disabilities to fully participate in Parks and Recreation programs. For information, call Adaptive Recreation at 952-563-8899 or e-mail parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us ♦

Reach for the stars!

Where: Valley View Middle School, 8900 Portland Ave.
Oak Grove Middle School, 1300 W. 106th St.
Olson Middle School, 4551 W. 102nd Street

Hours: Monday - Friday, 2:30 - 6 p.m.

Cost: \$25 per quarter or \$.50 daily.

The sky's the limit for youth, grades 6 through 8, at Galaxy Youth Centers, located in all three middle schools. The centers provide opportunities to empower youth through recreation, leadership, socialization, learning and service activities.

For more information, call 952-886-8848. ♦

Super Sign-Up Saturday!

When: Saturday, April 12.

Time: 9 - 11 a.m.

Where: Oak Grove Middle School, 1300 W. 106th St.

Take advantage of this great opportunity to ask questions, organize your child's summer and register in one place. Summer Spectrum, an eight-week collaborative effort between Bloomington Parks and Recreation, Community Education and the Bloomington Art Center, offers a variety of summer activities for youth, complete with transportation and childcare. Look for more information on all of the Summer Spectrum programs when the brochure is delivered in late March. For more information, call Parks and Recreation or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword "spectrum." ♦

Bloomington Athletic Association (BAA)

BAA offers baseball and softball programs for boys and girls, age 6 through 12, including a mini-mite program for kids, age 6. For information on programs, call the BAA Information Line at 952-888-0807 or visit their Web site at www.baaonline.org. ♦

Bloomington Youth Soccer Club

Recognized as one of the Twin Cities' best instructional soccer programs, Junior Kickers Summer Soccer is a 10-week introduction to the basics for children, ages 5 through 12. From May to mid-July, there are weekly team practices with games late Sunday afternoons. For more information, call our voicemail at 952-820-9444 or watch the *Sun Current* for details. ♦